

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ABU DH 00285 011202Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 EB-08 DOE-11 SOE-02
COME-00 /115 W

-----114280 012318Z /64

R 011104Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7280
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 0285

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PBOR, TC, MU
SUBJECT: STATUS OF OMAN-RAS AL KHAIMAH BORDER DISPUTE

REF: (A) ABU DHABI 217, (B) TEHRAN 998, (C) MUSCAT 155
(261131Z JAN) (291038Z JAN) (290352Z JAN)

1. IN COURSE OF MY CALL ON MINSTATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS
RASHID ABDALLAH TO REVIEW MOST RECENT US DIPLOMATIC
EFFORTS IN MIDDLE EAST, I TOOK OPPORTUNITY ASK STATUS
OF OMAN-RAS AL KHAIMAH BORDER DISPUTE. I SAID THAT DUR-
ING MY TOUR IN NORTHERN EMIRATES EARLIER IN WEEK,
I HAD BEEN INFORMED BY SHAIKH SULTAN, RULER OF
SHARJAH, THAT THINGS DID NOT LOOK GOOD AND THAT
OMANIS HAD SENT ANOTHER GUNBOAT TO RAS AL KHAIMAH WATER

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TO CIRCLE ZAPATA OFFSHORE DRILLING RIG ON JANUARY 26. I NOTED
ABDALLAH HIMSELF ALSO HAD BEEN IN NORTHERN EMIRATES DIS-
CUSSING ISSUES WITH RULERS, THIS BEING HIS FIRST
DAY BACK IN ABU DHABI.

2. ABDALLAH CONFIRMED THAT OMANIS INDEED HAD
SENT ANOTHER GUNBOAT TO CIRCLE RIG "THREE TIMES" AND THAT

THIS WAS SEEN AS OMANI EFFORT TO KEEP UP PRESSURE ON RAS AL KHAIMAH RULER SHAIKH SAQR. TALKS BETWEEN OMANI FONMIN ZAWAWI AND OMANI MIN INTERIOR AT RAS AL KHAIMAH ON JANUARY 22 WITH SHAIKH SAQR HAD GONE BADLY (REF A). SINCE OMANIS COOL TO IDEA OF MEDIATION BY SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN AND KUWAIT AND PREFERRED TO DEAL BILATERALLY, SAQR HAD REVERTED TO HIS PREVIOUS POSITION OF LAYING CLAIM TO COAST ALL WAY NORTH TO BUKHA. MEETING FOLLOWING DAY AT MUSCAT BETWEEN FONMIN SUWAIDI, ZAWAWI AND SULTAN QABUS HAD NOT RESULTED IN OMANIS GIVING ANY "ONE MONTH ULTIMATUM" FOR ACTION. RATHER, OMANIS HAD AGREED TO SUWAIDI SUGGESTION THAT DISCUSSIONS PICK UP ONE MONTH FROM THEN AFTER ZAYID SUGGESTION WILL HAVE RETURNED FROM PAKISTAN AND SULTAN QABUS FROM HIS VISIT TO UK. ABDALLAH SAID THAT ZAYID WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE TO INTERVENE WITH SAQR TO HAMMER SOMETHING OUT ALTHOUGH THIS COULD BECOME MORE COMPLICATED IF OMANIS CONTINUE TO SHOW OVERT SIGNS OF FORCE.

3. TO MY QUESTION, ABDALLAH SAID FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM IRANIAN GOVERNMENT RELATING TO RAS AL KHAIMAH OFFSHORE DRILLING. THE MESSAGE DID NOT CLAIM AREA NOW BEING DRILLED BY RAS AL KHAIMAH AS IRANIAN. RATHER, MESSAGE POINTED OUT THAT IRAN HAD NOT BEEN PREVIOUSLY INFORMED OR CON-
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SULTED ABOUT DRILLING IN AREA AND ASKED THAT IT BE SO INFORMED IN FUTURE. ABDALLAH NOTED THAT THERE IS NO MEDIAN LINE AGREEMENT BETWEEN RAS AL KHAIMAH AND IRAN AS THERE IS FOR ALL OTHER EMIRATES. HE SAID THAT UNDER OTHER AGREEMENTS, THERE IS UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE ARE TO BE CONSULTATIONS WHEN OFFSHORE DRILLING OCCURS BY EITHER SIDE NEAR MEDIAN LINE TO AVOID POTENTIAL PROBLEMS RELATING TO DRILLING IN THE SAME STRUCTURE. COMMENT: MY IMPRESSION IS THAT MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM IRANIANS WAS TECHNICAL IN NATURE AND MAY HAVE ORIGINATED FROM GOI MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM. EMBASSY TEHRAN MAY WISH CHECK THIS.
DICKMAN

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BORDER INCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ABUDH00285
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780049-0020
Format: TEL
From: ABU DHABI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197802109/aaaadntc.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ab7f08ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 ABU DHABI 217, 78 TEHRAN 998, 78 MUSCAT 155
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3448860
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STATUS OF OMAN-RAS AL KHAIMAH BORDER DISPUTE
TAGS: PBOR, TC, MU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ab7f08ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014